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24 hours without food. 7. An abstract of a Letter from Mr. Heathcot to Mr. J. Flamsteed Astron. Reg. from Cabo Cors Castle on the coast of Guiney Dec. 14, 1683. concerning the Tide on that Coast, Variation of the Needle, &c. An account of a Book, Martini Lister M. D. e S. R. Lond. de FONTIBUS MEDICATIS Angliae, Exercitatio altera. Londoni. in Octav. 1684.

A Letter from the learned and ingenious Mr. Will. Molyneux Secretary to the Society of Dublin, to Will. Musgrave L. L. B. Fellow of New Colledge, and Secretary to the Philosophical Society of Oxford, for advancement of natural Knowledge; concerning Lough Neagh in Ireland, and its petrifying Qualitys.

SIR,

IN Answer to the Oxford Society's Query concerning our Lough Neagh and its Petrifying Qualitys, I make this return.

i. That it is generally agreed by all the Inhabitants thereabouts, that it has that Quality, but yet I have a Letter by me from a Gentleman (unknown to me, and therefore I will not promise for his Credit or the Fidelity of his enquiry) that that positively denies that there is any such thing, but asserts that the Stones, that are brought to us as petryfy'd Wood, are found deep in Sand Hills in the Country adjoyning to the Lough, alledging as an experiment, that a Gentleman of his Acquaintance, stuck an Oak Stake into the Lough twenty years ago, which there remains unalter'd. But I conceive this Assertion to be without ground, and the experiment's fallly made; For first 'tis agreed by all that no Wood will Petrifie in this Lough, except Holly, so that his applying an Oak Stake was improper; Secondly, for their being found in Sand Hills, they may easily be supposed in process of time to have been brought thither, and left there: for I do not find he asserts that they are found so deep in those Hills that have not been dug up; and thirdly, it is with some probability asserted (and I have a Letter from an understanding Person thereabouts confirming it) that the Earth about Lough Neagh has this Petrifying Quality, and we may well imagine that these sand Hills especially, are not destitute thereof;

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For I am certainly informed, that a Gentleman of the Country about this Lough a little before the Rebellion cut down some Timber for building, and amongst others cut down a large Holly Tree, but being diverted by the Rebels from building, his Timber lay on the ground in the place where it was fell'd, upon the banks of the Lough, all the miserable time of the War ; till at last, the Kingdom being settled, the Gentleman went to look for his Timber, and found the other Timber overgrown with moss, and the Holly petrified, tho the Water of the Lough had never reach'd it.

2. I Query whether the Holly it self, that grows upon the Banks of this Lough, may not be more apt to be Petrified, than the same wood growing other where, and brought thinner, and put into the Lough, for certainly if the ground has this Quality, this is very likely to follow.

3. That what we call Lough Neagh stone was once Wood, is most probable on these accounts, first it will not stir with Acid, which is a property observed by Dr. Grew on some petrified Woods, in the *Museum R. S.* p. 270. tho the Dr. does there make it an Argument for his suspecting they are *Lapides sui generis*. Secondly, the Lough Neagh stone will burn and flame ; and the smoak of it smells like the smoak of wood. Thirdly, when burnt it betrays the very Grain of Wood, with the other vessels belonging to Vegetables. But that which confirms me above all, that these Stones were once Wood is, because I have many of them by me of various Degrees of Petrification, I suppose according to the time they remained in the Water, which I could never hear justly determined ; some that have clearly lost the colour of Wood, and are become perfectly black, and very hard ; others that are not so black nor hard ; But one more especially was sent me about a year ago, which is a Parallelepiped of about four Inches long and an Inch thick, cut I suppose whilst Wood into that shape purposely, whose outward coat is very black and smooth, but this is meerly superficial, for being cleft longwise through the middle (which it suffer'd far more easily then that which is more thoroughly petrified) I there discovered the whole body perfectly of the colour and grain of Holly, for I can scrape it with my nail ; but what was most surprising in it was the discovery of the Pith, as plainly and as perfectly distinct in colour and texture from the rest (but it also was Petrify'd) as it could possibly have been seen in the natural Wood ; That this piece when wood was cut in-

to this shape on purpose to try the *Experiment*, I am induced to believe on these accounts, first no *Tree* grows in the shape of a *Parallel piped*; and that this is not a *Stone* appears from the inward texture, differing so much from the outward coat, and from the smoothness of the outward coat, and ruffiness inwardly, which smoothness could never be induced since it was a *Stone*, for if you grind it so as in the least to wear off the outward black coat, the rough white inside shews it self immediately.

4. What the Learned Physician *Anselm Boetius* asserts in his *Historia lapidum & Gemmarum* is certainly false, viz. That that part of the *Wood* that is buried in the *Mud* will become *Iron*, that part touch'd by the *Water* becomes *Stone*, and that above the *Water* remains *Wood*, for I never have seen or could hear of any part of the *Stone* in the least resembling *Iron*.

5. I have used some endeavours to procure a piece of this *Lough Neagh stone* to which the *Wood* was yet fast'ned, but I never could attain it, tho' some assert they have seen pieces 2 or 3 foot long with about 8 or 10 inches of *stone* and the rest *Wood*. Tho' I am apt to believe this may be stretching the matter too far, for I conceive that that *Humour* that *Petrifies* one part, when it begins to operate, insinuates it self soon throughout the whole body.

6. Tis observed that this *petrifying Quality* is not equally diffused throughout the whole *Lough* (which is about 15 or 16 miles long, and 8 or 9 miles broad in all places) but is most strong about that part where the *black Water* (a River so call'd) empty's it self into this *Lough*, that is about the *Southwest Corner*; as likewise tis said to be more strong about the *Edges* of the *Lough*, then further into the *Water*.

7. It was queried a while ago by an Ingenious and Learned Member of the Royal S. Mr. *Hally*, whether *Lough Neagh stone* were not *Magneticall*, for he was told it was; but upon tryal I find it is not, for it will not stir a *Needle*, or *Steel filings*, neither will it apply to the *Magnet*, in powder or calcined.

This is all that offers it self at present relating to the Query of the *Oxford Society*, if any thing more occur, they shall be informed thereof by

Their most Obliged

Humble Servant

William Molyneux.
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